



FALL • 2007

Veterans' Health

THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE
FOR OHIO VETERANS

Getting
past
PTSD

Improved
services at VA

Announcing a
new suicide
prevention
hotline

What is
MRSA?

VA Healthcare
System of Ohio



To our readers

Fall is about coming back from vacations and tackling our to-do lists. If contact-



ing VA about your healthcare needs is on your list, turn to page 4 to find out who your point of contact is at your local healthcare

facility. VA Healthcare System of Ohio has made it easier than ever to take advantage of the services we have to offer our deserving veterans and service members. Turn to page 5 to learn more.

If you know a female veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, you'll find information about our special therapy programs just for women on page 3.

Remember, we're here to serve those who have given so much of themselves.

Have a great fall!

—Jack Hetrick, Network Director

Suicide prevention hotline

VA has a national suicide prevention hotline for veterans. The toll-free number is **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

Veterans' Health is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 21 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

The Mission of VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.



About our mailing list

We make every effort to ensure our mailing lists are accurate. If you have questions or would like to be added to or deleted from the list, let us know. Please include your entire address. To make a change, you *must* mail the mailing panel to:

Veterans' Health

VA Healthcare System of Ohio Network Office

11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200

Cincinnati, OH 45249

Veterans' Health is online at **www.visn10.va.gov**. Visit this site to view back issues or subscribe.

Facility inspections planned

The Joint Commission will conduct an unannounced triennial accreditation survey of all VHA facilities. Additionally, a one-day unannounced survey may occur at any time.

These surveys evaluate the organization's compliance with nationally established Joint Commission standards. Anyone who has pertinent and valid information about such matters may contact the Joint Commission by phone at **1-800-994-6610**, by e-mail at **complaint@jointcommission.org** or by writing to:

Division on Accreditation Operations

Office of Quality Monitoring

The Joint Commission

1 Renaissance Blvd.

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

What is MRSA?

MRSA—methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*—is a staph bacteria that cannot be killed with the antibiotic methicillin, making it hard to treat. Once found only in hospitals and nursing homes, MRSA is in our homes as well. You can pass MRSA to others without knowing it.

Wash your hands to prevent the spread of MRSA. Use soap and water or a waterless antimicrobial hand cleaner for at least 15 seconds. Clean your hands after coming in contact with another person, before you eat and after using the restroom. If they're visibly dirty, use soap and water.

Veterans' Health Editorial Directors

Suzanne Tate

VA Healthcare System of Ohio

Debbie Crabtree

Chillicothe VAMC

Debbie Page

VA Healthcare System of Ohio

Joyce Seltzer

Cincinnati VAMC

Kristen Fortner

Dayton VAMC

Molly Lyons

VA Healthcare System of Ohio



Getting past PTSD

How do you treat a wound you can't see? That's a problem VA tackles every day when it treats patients for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

PTSD causes symptoms like sleepless nights, depression and anger. Although PTSD can affect anyone, women are almost twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with it.

PTSD therapy, just for women

VA offers programs to help female veterans with PTSD. Women and men receive the same treatment, says Kathleen Chard, Ph.D., director of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorders Division at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. Women experience many of the same traumas as men, such as seeing a friend killed in combat; however, the two genders receive treatment separately. Women getting help for a trauma such as sexual assault feel more comfortable that way.

Treatment lasts for seven weeks or 12 sessions at the Fort Thomas Domiciliary in Kentucky. Some sessions may be private, while others are held in a group setting. Therapists may use two different treatments: prolonged exposure and cognitive processing therapy (CPT). Prolonged exposure therapy helps patients control their fears by having them talk again and again about their trauma. CPT helps patients understand their trauma and how it's affecting them by helping the patient examine the

details of the trauma and how the events shape the way they interact with the world today. The therapy also works to help patients change their negative thoughts created by the trauma, such as a rape victim's belief that no man can be trusted.

CPT has proven very successful. According to Dr. Chard, the therapy works for 70 percent of patients who receive it. That success has led to 15 months of VA-wide CPT training. "By the time we're done, every VA will have someone trained in cognitive processing therapy," Dr. Chard says.

VA also educates family and friends about the condition.

"I've had so many soldiers tell me they'd rather have a physical wound," says Dr. Chard. "When you have PTSD, there's a perceived sense of weakness. And when you're irritable and explosive, it can be hard for people to sympathize."

VA covers the cost of therapy for anyone eligible for mental health services, Dr. Chard says. If you think you may be suffering from PTSD, speak to your VA counselor or therapist about your symptoms and treatment options. **VH**

Learn more

For more information, call the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Anxiety Disorders Division of the Cincinnati VA Medical Center at **859-572-6208**.

Points of contact for OIF/OEF veterans

VISN 10 Office

**VISN POC/Acting VISN
Lead Program Manager**
Debbie Page, R.N., MPH
513-247-4629
BlackBerry: 513-615-6450

Chillicothe, OH VAMC

**OIF/OEF Program
Manager (Acting)**
Carroll McShane, LCSW
740-773-1141, ext. 7266
Pager: 614-640-0002

Alternate

Lorri McLaughlin
740-773-1141, ext. 7655
Cell: 740-649-7605

Transition Patient Advocate

Lorri McLaughlin
740-773-1141, ext. 7655
Cell: 740-649-7605

OIF/OEF Case Manager/ Outreach Coordinator

Charlene Grace, LSW
740-773-1141, ext. 7284
Pager: 614-640-0003

Columbus, OH OPC

**OIF/OEF Program
Manager**
Janene Luff, CNP, MSN, MHA
614-257-5421
Cell: 614-746-2623

Alternate

Mark Mauri, MSW, LISW
614-257-5610
Cell: 614-323-6696

Transition Patient Advocate

Lorri McLaughlin
740-773-1141, ext. 7655
Cell: 513-314-4340

OIF/OEF Case Manager

Deborah Polasky-Walker,
MSW, LISW
614-257-5360

Outreach Coordinator

Mark Mauri, MSW, LISW
614-257-5610
Cell: 614-323-6696

Dayton, OH VAMC

**OIF/OEF Program
Manager (Acting)**
Dave Drew, LISW
937-268-6511, ext. 2890
937-344-6581

Alternate

Janine Wert, MSW
937-268-6511, ext. 1698
Cell: 937-266-7144

Transition Patient Advocate

Susan Walters
513-861-3100, ext. 4707
513-509-2137

OIF/OEF Case Manager

Janine Wert, MSW
937-268-6511, ext. 1698
937-266-7144

OIF/OEF Outreach Coordinator

Leon Lacy, SW, MHCL
937-268-6511, ext. 2876
Cell: 937-266-3953

Cleveland, OH VAMC

OIF/OEF Program Manager
Patricia Hall, APRN, BC, MSN
440-526-3030, ext. 7500
Cell: 216-701-5266

Alternate

Susan (Cricket) Gruneisen
330-262-1001, ext. 2129
Cell: 216-701-9388

Transition Patient Advocate

Susan (Cricket) Gruneisen
330-262-1001, ext. 2129
Cell: 216-701-9388

OIF/OEF Case Manager

Rhonda Trice, R.N.
216-791-3800, ext. 5842
Pager: 440-562-0219

OIF/OEF Outreach Coordinator

Holly Hirsell, MSSA, LISW,
LICDC
440-526-3030, ext. 6891
Cell: 216-701-4921

Cincinnati, OH VAMC

**OIF/OEF Program
Manager**
Karen Cutright, LISW
513-861-3100, ext. 5187
Cell: 513-479-9054

Alternate

David Roby
513-861-3100, ext. 5335
Cell: 513-317-6519

Transition Patient Advocate

Susan Walters
513-861-3100, ext. 4707
Cell: 513-509-2137

OIF/OEF Case Manager

Karen Cutright, LISW
513-861-3100, ext. 5187
513-479-9054

Outreach Coordinator

David Roby
513-861-3100, ext. 5335
Cell: 513-317-6519

VA healthcare: You've earned it



As more and more Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) service members and veterans need healthcare, VA has been challenged with providing well-coordinated physical and mental health services.

Who can receive VA healthcare?

Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations during a period of war after the Persian Gulf War or in combat during periods of hostility after November 11, 1998, are eligible for hospital care and medical services for any illness that may be related to their service. For two years following separation from military service, veterans don't have to pay medical care and medication co-payments, no matter how much money they make. VA calls this "enhanced combat veteran benefits."

National Guard and Reserve members who were mobilized to active duty, served in a combat theater and separated from active duty are eligible for VA healthcare and benefits, including enhanced combat veteran benefits.

How can I receive VA healthcare?

VA Healthcare System of Ohio has made it easier

for OIF/OEF active-duty service members and veterans to use VA's healthcare system. Each VA medical center and independent outpatient clinic has a nurse or social worker OIF/OEF program manager, social work or nurse case manager, outreach staff and transition patient advocate. The program manager coordinates care for OIF/OEF service members and veterans. Social workers at military treatment facilities help seriously injured or ill OIF/OEF service members who need a case manager, including those at home on convalescent leave, be transferred to a VA healthcare facility.

Outreach coordinators, along with other local healthcare enrollment staff, work with local military branches to help returning combat veterans and provide information about VA healthcare and other benefits. Coordinators also take part in post-deployment health reassessment events to coordinate enrollment and referral for healthcare or other needed services.

If you know a returning combat veteran who hasn't enrolled for VA healthcare, please share with him or her the contact information on page 4. We want every combat veteran to take advantage of healthcare and other benefits they have earned. **VH**

Improved services at VA

Improved mental health services are now available at VA Healthcare System of Ohio.

Mental health services

VA Healthcare System of Ohio now uses the Recovery Model for its mental health programs. We believe mental illness can be successfully treated and people with mental illness can get better, so they can work, have relationships and lead fulfilling lives. We have increased services for treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), drug abuse, serious mental illness and mental and social rehabilitation and recovery.

Homeless program. VA's mental health strategic plan is to give complete care to homeless veterans with mental illness. Case management programs are set up for homeless veterans with mental illness or who abuse drugs. Providing a full range of services with help from local community services is part of this plan.

Services for returning veterans. VA now has added more staff to provide mental health services to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans.

PTSD treatment. VA Healthcare System of Ohio has created a PTSD/Combat Stress University. Education and treatment are offered to veterans and their families. Reserve/Guard units, veteran service organizations, primary-care providers and others who help veterans may refer veterans to this program.

Easier access to services

Patients often talk to their primary-care providers about depression, anxiety or a drug abuse problem,



but they don't want to enter a mental health program because they're embarrassed. VA Healthcare System of Ohio is improving access to primary care and mental health services to encourage more veterans to seek help.

In addition, all community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in VA Healthcare System of Ohio offer basic mental health services, like counseling and medication. We now have additional mental-health staff at the CBOCs, which are located less than a 30-minute drive from most veterans. Veterans who can't get to a CBOC can join the Telemental Health Program and receive treatment at home.

Suicide prevention

Suicide prevention is an important part of VA's mental health strategic plan, and VA Healthcare System of Ohio has a suicide prevention coordinator on staff to help veterans. **VA**

Suicide prevention hotline

VA has a national suicide prevention hotline for veterans. The toll-free number is **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

VA Healthcare System of Ohio has three transition patient advocates (TPAs) for seriously injured Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) veterans and service members seeking medical care. The TPAs work with social workers and nursing case managers to coordinate and manage the required care. TPAs help veterans move through VA's system and will even take veterans and service members to a VA medical center when they're transferred.

TPAs begin working with severely injured OIF/OEF active-duty service members when the VA liaison at the military treatment facility (MTF) tells them the service member is ready to transition from the MTF to a VA facility.



Help for returning veterans

Transition patient advocates

Do you or someone you know need help going through VA's process? If so, call one of our TPAs:

Chillicothe/Columbus

Lorri McLaughlin
Chillicothe VA
Medical Center
17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
Call: 740-773-1141, ext. 7655
or 1-800-358-8262, ext. 7655

Cincinnati/Dayton

Susan Walters
Cincinnati VA
Medical Center
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
Call: 513-861-3100, ext. 4707
Cell: 513-509-2137

Cleveland

Susan (Cricket) Gruneisen
124 N. Walnut Street
Wooster, Ohio 44691
Call: 330-262-1001,
ext. 2129
Cell: 216-701-9388
Fax: 330-262-1037

Reaching us is easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

Chillicothe VAMC

17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Athens

510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

Cambridge

2145 Southgate
Cambridge, OH 43725
740-432-1963

Lancaster

1550 Sheridan Drive,
Suite 100
Colonnade Medical
Building
Lancaster, OH 43130
740-653-6145

Marietta

418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0412

Portsmouth

621 Broadway Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-3236

Cincinnati VAMC

3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Ft. Thomas VA Campus

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
859-572-6202

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Bellevue

103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Clermont County

Eastgate Professional
Office Park
4355 Ferguson Drive, Suite 270
Cincinnati, OH 45245
513-943-3680

Hamilton

1755 South Erie Highway
Hamilton, OH 45011
513-870-9444

Dearborn County

1600 Flossie Drive
Greendale IN 47025
812-539-2313

Florence, KY

7711 Ewing Boulevard
Florence, KY 41042
859-282-4480

Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC

10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Brecksville VA Medical Center

10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
440-526-3030

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Akron

55 West Waterloo
Akron, OH 44319
330-724-7715

Canton

733 Market Avenue South
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4600

East Liverpool

Ogilvie Square
15655 State Route 170
Cuttota, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Lorain

205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3833

Mansfield

1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

McCafferty

4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

New Philadelphia

1260 Monroe Avenue, #15H
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Painesville

7 West Jackson Street
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Ravenna

6751 North Chestnut Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

Sandusky

3416 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Warren

1977 Niles Road SE
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown

2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic

543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Grove City

1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Marion

1203 Delaware Avenue
Marion, OH 43302
740-223-8089

Newark

1912 Tamarack Road
Newark, OH 43055
740-788-8329

Zanesville

840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

Dayton VAMC

4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

Community-Based Outpatient Clinics

Lima

1303 Bellefontaine Avenue
Lima, OH 45804
419-222-5788

Middletown

675 North University Boulevard
Middletown, OH 45042
513-423-8387

Richmond

4351 South A Street
Richmond, IN 47374
765-973-6915

Springfield

512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at www.visn10.va.gov

VA Healthcare System of Ohio Network Office
11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200
Cincinnati, OH 45249



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